

## HOW A BIG NEWS STORY IS COVERED.

Furnished by Will Owen Jones for City Desk Department.

In the number of the Home Magazine of New York following the great fire and explosion in the Tarrant drug store in New York City, that was witnessed from a fourth story window of the Cosmopolitan hotel by the editor of this paper in October last, appeared an article entitled "How a Big News Story is Covered." It is a vivid description of a New York newspaper office, presumably the Sun, at the time of the great fire and explosion. The writer, George Barry Mallon, is a member of the staff of that paper. After describing the leisurely and inadequate manner in which the newspapers of Paris covered the great charity bazaar fire, and telling something about the work of the city editor and the interior arrangements of the office, Mr. Mallon takes up the story of the day:

The city editor's telephone bell rang and the police headquarters man reported that first and second fire alarms had been sent in from Box 62, which is at the corner of Murray street and Broadway. This is a neighborhood of big buildings, and second alarms are rung for fires which only demand a single alarm up town. The clatter and clamor of a dozen fire engines and half as many hook and ladder trucks could be heard plainly as the city editor rang up the receiver. As he glanced out of his window the first explosion occurred, and he could see the black smoke shooting up further west than Broadway. This was followed quickly by a second explosion. The newspaper building was shaken to its foundations. From the office windows it looked as if a volcano might have poked its nose through the western side of Manhattan Island and gone into action. It was obviously a "big story." The first reporter on whom the city editor's eyes lighted was sent flying, with a fire badge, to locate the fire and telephone the office at once. He happened to be one of the younger men. As he hurried across the City Hall plaza, dodging here and there the pieces of charred wood which were falling, he knew that more experienced men would write most of this story. He noticed a man running for cover with blood pouring down his cheek from a wound. At Broadway he saw half a dozen people who had been injured in the stampede or by falling fragments. A policeman half way down Murray street warned him back. When the reporter showed his fire badge he said: "All right, go ahead." The police fire lines had not been formed yet and the few patrolmen in the neighborhood were doing their best to drive the spectators from the danger zone. The reporter saw, at a glance, the extent of the ruins and after a few quick questions of the nearest policeman he telephoned the city editor. "Nearly a whole block at Murray and Greenwich streets is in ruins," he said, "and everything around here is in a chaotic condition. Perhaps 150 to 200 people have been killed and as many injured. Tarrant's drug store blew up."

"To what police stations will the reports go?"

"Leonard and Church street stations probably. The wounded are being taken to all the downtown hospitals."

"Then I want you to go to the Church street station," said the city editor, "and pay particular attention to all reports of missing people. Get their names and addresses."

Within two minutes the police headquarters man telephoned to the city editor that a fifth alarm had been sent in, and that all the ambulances in the lower part of the city had been summoned to the fire. The chief of police had ordered to the fire lines the reserves from all the stations south of Twenty-third street. Chemicals in Tarrant's drug store had caused the explosions, according to the first police bulletin. So many people had been injured that even the police surgeons had been summoned. The police wires were filled with the messages sent out from headquarters.

The city editors of the evening pa-

pers had sent at once to the fire all the men such could spare, because traveling newspapers must race against time on this story. There was no such immediate haste for the morning newspapers. It was then 12:30 p. m., and there was time enough before going to press to get up a new history of the world if this were necessary. The Tarrant disaster had assumed large proportions so quickly, however, that it was necessary for the city editor to partially recast his schedule and double up some of his assignments that he might spare more men for this story. The reporter who covered the West Side Police court was notified to write the jailbreaking story also. Half an hour earlier this story had a fair chance of getting on the first page. The conditions had changed rapidly, and a column on an inside page was all that it was worth now. The contests in the Congress districts, to which special men had been assigned on previous days, must be written by the regular political reporters today. Some of the department men were assigned to additional stories, and the city editor found that he could command at once the services of a dozen reporters, with as many more in sight later in the afternoon. The men who reported for general work were now arriving rapidly. Summoning half a dozen men to his desk the city editor briefly outlined the disaster as he then knew it. The most experienced of them was assigned to do the general story. That is, he was to write the introduction, describe the fire and the explosions, deal with the causes, and tell all the news about the wrecked buildings. Other men would be sent out later to get details which this man might want to use in his story. A second reporter was assigned to the news of the buildings for a block around which had been damaged, and to such personal experience of the survivors as he might obtain. A third man was sent to the Leonard street station to obtain from all sources there a list of the missing. Another reporter was sent to the Hudson street hospital, where most of the injured would be taken, because it was near the fire. One man was assigned to cover the New York and St. Vincent's hospitals and another to cover the Gouverneur Hospital. The regular Bellevue Hospital reporter was expected to look out for the fire victims at that institution. Half a dozen men were held in reserve. The first reporter who had been sent to the Church Street station rang up the city editor to say that an information bureau had been established at the Leonard street station, where all reports of missing people would be made. His assignment was therefore changed at once. He was told to find some member of the Tarrant Drug company who could tell him exactly what drugs had been stored in the building and possibly offer some explanation of the explosion. Other reporters were sent out on the assignments made out earlier in the day which must be covered. The city editor then found time to talk with two or three men who had waited to see him on "matters of importance to the paper," which proved to be dull axes of their own to grind. He dictated half a dozen dispatches to suburban correspondents and talked with as many men over the telephone. The city editor of a daily metropolitan newspaper is a busy man.

When the second editions of the afternoon papers began coming to the desks of the city editor and his assistants, each was scanned quickly for news. The big headlines placed the list of dead at 150 and announced that Chief Crocker and thirty firemen had been buried in the ruins. This latter report proved to be untrue, but because of it a reporter was at once sent to get the facts about the missing firemen. It requires several hours of hard work to run down such a rumor as this, and New York newspapers, unlike those of Paris, are not expected to print as news unverified rumors of the street. The reporter who was doing the general story of the fire now had it well in hand and he rang up the city editor to outline it. He said that he needed help to look up odds and ends of the story, and two men were sent to report to him. A bank building which stood across the street had been partially wrecked by the explosions, and it was rumored that the clerks in their hurry to escape had left large sums of money on the counters. A reporter was assigned to investigate this, see the offi-

cers of the bank and write the facts. From the Western Union telegraph office came the news that 200 of their wires from the main operating room which ran under the Ninth avenue elevated structure had been broken by the falling walls, and a man was sent from the office to write it. It was known that the tenants of some of the skyscraping office buildings down town had fled to the street when the second explosion occurred. The city editor wanted more than a bare statement of this fact; he wanted details, and a reporter was sent to get them. It was now near the middle of the afternoon and the managing editor arrived. He had other

details to attend to than the Tarrant fire story, and his immediate interest in it was satisfied with a brief report from the city editor. The managing editor had the whole world for his field, and he must send dispatches to his correspondents in this country, cablegrams to his men in London or China, as the occasion demanded, and receive one after another the men who had been waiting anxiously to talk with him. It was evident that the rush of city copy that night would be heavy, and the city editor prepared for it by assigning extra men to read copy, that the night city editor might be free to

handle the fire story. Something else was sure to "break loose" during the evening, and the earlier city copy was edited and put in type the better prepared the office would be to handle it. Additional typewriter operators were ordered to report at the office at 6 o'clock for the use of reporters who wanted to dictate their stories. Some of the men would work their own typewriters and others who could not do so good work with machines would write their stories. A reporter who had been on the long wait the night before, that is, on duty from 6 p. m. until 3:30 a. m., arrived, and was assigned to handle in the office the lists of dead, missing

and injured. He must verify all names and addresses when possible by the directory and arrange them in alphabetical order. This is work enough to keep one or two men busy on such occasions. As the names of the missing were telephoned from time to time by the Leonard street station man, reporters were sent out to look up their addresses. One of the artists was instructed to prepare a block map showing the location of the wrecked building and the damaged around it. A reporter was sent to get an estimate of the losses and an account of the insurance, another to see the inspector of combustibles for an official statement, and a third to interview druggists and chemists who, from their knowledge of the stock carried by the Tarrant Drug company, might give a plausible explanation of the cause of the explosion. These assignments were made by the city editor as they occurred to him during the afternoon and as the men to cover them reported at the office.

When the night city editor arrived at 5 o'clock p. m. the schedule of assignments was completed up to that hour. New men had been selected to relieve those who had been covering the fire story during the afternoon; that the latter might come to the office and begin writing. The big editorial room, which had been busy in the day time, was now flooded with electric light. Reporters at nearly every desk were busy writing copy. A night city editor takes up the work where the day editor leaves it. He must make such additional assignments during the evening as may be necessary and with the aid of half a dozen copy readers who report at 6 o'clock p. m. he must edit all the city copy and write captions on it. Enough copy is thrown away every night to fill an extra paper. Either because it is comparatively unimportant, or for other reasons, it is not available. Although a score of assignments have been made on the Tarrant fire, the major part of this new story will be written by two or three men who are now turning out copy rapidly. When ever one of them piles up four or five written pages in the big editorial room, the night city editor hurries it to the night city editor's desk.

In addition to the night city editor, and his assistants, nearly a dozen other men, telegraph, suburban and sporting editors, are now busily engaged in editing copy. There is a faint haze of tobacco smoke in the big editorial room. Most of the men are working with their shirts rolled back. The copy editors are not only expected to correct all mistakes in the copy, but if the story is badly constructed they must tear it apart and reconstruct it. The proofs are read later by the night editor and by the managing editor, who is the court of last resort, and each of them is looking for mistakes to correct. The telegraph editor, who is reading Washington copy, swines around in his chair and calls out to the night city editor:

"Senator Blank died unexpectedly this evening. Have you a man to get up his obituary, or shall I ask the Washington office to telegraph it?"

The night city editor assigns one of the reporters who is disengaged to write the senator's obituary. The reporter gets his facts from the books of reference in the library and from the newspaper clippings which he finds in the "obit box" in an envelope bearing Senator Blank's name. Every man of public importance in the world is represented by an envelope in that same "obit box" which really isn't a box at all, but a double chest of small indexed drawers, each filled with long envelopes. Some of the envelopes contain merely newspaper clippings, and in others are carefully written obituaries ready to be sent to composing room at a moment's notice.

The typesetting machines up stairs are clicking away automatically at full speed, making columns of type out of the copy. From the floor below comes indistinctly the rattle of dozens of galley machines, receiving dispatches from all parts of the world and sending out to 150 widely scattered newspapers the results of this paper's news gathering for the day. Reporters come in, tell the night city editor briefly what they have obtained and then write it, according to his directions. There is no confusion. Each man knows what he is expected to do. By 10 o'clock nearly 10,000 words about the Tarrant fire have been edited and put in type. Fresh proofs are dumped

every few minutes on the desks of the managing and night editors. The tension increases.

From Elmhurst is coming over the wire a story of a mob attack on a vice presidential candidate. At least two columns must be devoted to a meeting in Brooklyn at which one of the presidential candidates has just spoken. The cable editor is demanding a column and a half for the story of London's riotous greeting of her returned troops. The absconding note taker who stole \$700,000 from a national bank has been captured in Boston and brought to New York at 11 o'clock that evening. The reporter who is covering this assignment telephones to the night city editor that the chief of the detective bureau is saving out a long statement about the case and another column and a half must be saved for it. It is Monday night, and some time after 12 o'clock will come another column and a half about the new plays. There are late political stories of importance. Some one of the telephones is in constant use, and at times all of them, receiving reports of news events from all parts of the city. The managing editor sends around the word that "all copy must be put in the box" at midnight the night editor, with his hands full of proofs, goes up to the composing rooms to make up the editorial page. As soon as its type has been locked in the form a matrix is pounded on it and then sent down to the stereotypers, who have already started their fires in the furnaces below. As many plates are cast from this matrix as there are presses to supply. The night editor sees down word that the composing room is "jammed up" with more copy than he can possibly squeeze into the paper. More copy is sent up stairs, however, and the night editor must find a place for it, because it is important. As he pores over the galleys of type fresh proofs are brought to him. It is now 1 o'clock. He must decide quickly what stories he is going to use and where to place them in the paper. The night city editor and his assistants are sending up copy page by page as they edit it. The cable and telegraph editors are also racing against time, and so is the sporting editor. With a telephone receiver at his ear a copy reader writes a hundred words sent in by a police station man at 1:30 a. m. about an accident up town. A waiting copy boy snatches it as soon as the last word is written and sends it up stairs. The head or caption follows a minute later. The night editor directs the composing room's make-up man where to place in the forms the galleys of type struggling for admission to the paper. Sixteen of these columns, 1,500 words each, have the right of way. They are to spread clear across the first and second pages and overflow on the third. They tell the story of the Tarrant fire. Nearly half of these columns have been written by three men and a score have contributed the rest. The copy editors have joined this mosaic so that the reader cannot tell where one man's work ends and another's begins. Page after page is quickly made up and set. The form of the third page has been held open for the latest news. At 2 o'clock this form is locked, matter is hastily made from it. Down in the basement the big presses are waiting silently, each for its plate of the third page. The first plate cast comes down in the rush. It is set in the press and the big machine goes rapidly to work printing the completed papers and tossing them out as rapidly as a pressman can pick them up. Plate after plate of the third page comes down, and each one in turn is the signal for another press to start. The whole building quivers with the rumble of the heavy machine and a new paper is born. More than 5,000 men in all parts of the world have contributed to the making of it. The managing editor and the night editor examine the first copies, which are brought to them at twenty minutes after 2, as a physician examines a newborn child. Should glaring mistakes be detected they must stop the presses and make over a form or two to correct them. The horde of impatient newsdealers waiting outside may not have the paper for an hour or more, but it should find its way into other news offices where its exclusive news would be quickly "lifted" for a second edition. When New York awakes, the newspaper, with as complete a day's record of the world's doing as money, energy and skill can make, is ready for it.

## MEN WHO HEAD THE DEMOCRATIC TICKET.



## JAMES C. LEARY.

James C. Leary was born in Hatfield, Hampshire county, Mass., March 15, 1860. At the age of thirteen he ran away from home and went to New York, where he made a living at selling papers for several months to later go to Liberty, Mo. He attended school in this town for three years and went to New Mexico where he secured a position as cook on a cattle ranch. After going through the mill in the capacity of a cowboy he was two years later advanced to the position of foreman of a big cattle ranch owned by Senator S. W. Dorey. After getting a footing in the cattle business for himself he finally sold out his interests and went to Denver in 1886. He came to Utah eight years ago and leased the Union Stock yards in which business he is associated at this time with A. H. Warren. Mr. Leary is from the forty-third district where he has resided ever since he came to Salt Lake City.

## RICHARD P. MORRIS.

Richard P. Morris, nominee for city treasurer, is a Salt Lake man, having been born in this city December 23, 1857. He was educated in the public schools here and by the time he was fourteen years of age he had mastered the art of sending telegraphic dispatches over the wire. Upon completing his education he was appointed a position on the Utah Central and subsequently for the space of two years he successfully filled the position of local freight agent for that company. In 1882 he was made chief dispatcher of that road, which has since been taken by the Oregon Short Line system and held that position until 1890. Since that time Mr. Morris has been engaged in the coal business, has been the recipient of a number of nominations at the

hands of the Democratic party and has also served two terms in the City Council and two as city treasurer.

## DOUGLAS A. SWAN.

Douglas A. Swan, candidate for city auditor, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, January 5, 1849. In 1864 he came to Utah and for a time he worked on a ranch in Iron county. Later he secured a position in the Salt Lake post-office and served under Postmasters Stein and Street. Afterwards he worked for a time in the capacity of compositor on the old Daily Telegraph. After filling the post of secretary and assistant auditor of the old Utah Southern in 1875 he responded to a call for a mission to Australia. After his release he returned to Salt Lake and entered the railroad service again in the capacity of trainmaster of the Utah Northern. Subsequently he was teller and bookkeeper in the Deseret National bank and cashier of the National bank at Provo. On the death of his father Mr. Swan filled out the unexpired term of city auditor. He is now deputy city treasurer.

## FRANK B. STEPHENS.

Frank B. Stephens, who was nominated by acclamation to succeed himself as city attorney, is a native of the state of Maine, where he was born in 1856. A few years after this event he was taken by his parents to Illinois, where he was educated to finally emerge with flying colors from the Union college at Chicago, where he studied law, having for a classmate William Jennings Bryan. After leaving college Mr. Stephens went to Nebraska, where he was admitted to the bar, and later became a member of the law firm of Dolis, Foss & Stephens. Mr. Stephens came to Salt Lake in 1883, and soon became well known as assist-

ant United States attorney under Hon. C. S. Varian.

## E. L. SLOAN.

Edward L. Sloan, Democratic nominee for recorder, was born in this city in 1865, and has practically lived here ever since. Mr. Sloan has a good record, and considerable experience in the kind of office work to which he now aspires. Four years ago he was appointed by G. H. Backman as his chief deputy and gave very general satisfaction. Since the change in the administration Mr. Sloan has been employed with the Midwestern Loan company, with County Treasurer W. H. Dale.

## MORRIS SOMMER.

Morris Sommer, nominee for city justice, was born at Hamburg, Germany, in 1859, and at the age of 21 he emigrated to America. Coming west he settled down in Denver, where he lived for ten years and then came on to Salt Lake in 1890. After studying law Mr. Sommer was admitted to the bar in 1894. One year later he was appointed United States commissioner. He has been elected three times as justice of the peace for the Second district.

## MATHONIAH THOMAS.

Mathoniah Thomas, one of the Democratic nominees for city justice, is a Welshman by birth, having been born in Aberdare, South Wales, in 1872. He came to Utah with his parents in 1878 when they resided in Salt Lake later to move to Farmington and eventually return to this city to dwell. Mr. Thomas was educated at the public schools of Salt Lake and for a time had journalistic aspirations, but finally decided to study law at the University of Michigan, where he secured high honors. Mr. Thomas was admitted to the bar in 1899 since which time he has practiced his profession here.

## PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AT 26.



ROOSEVELT AT 26  
PHOTO BY HENRY M. P.

## LOVE AND LOYALTY JAPAN'S RELIGION.

The Shinto religion, the primitive religion of Japan, is often defined as "ancestor worship." It is more than this, far more, but it is also less than this. It has been called no religion at all, because it has no creed, no ceremonies necessary to its practice, no sacred le-

gends or mysteries, and nothing of the machinery of spiritual power which characterizes great religions in other countries. It makes no proselytes. It opposes no belief and insists on none. It is the animating spirit that causes a Japanese to love his children, to be kind to his wife, to help the stranger, to be loyal to Japan, to devote his life to her service.—The Humanitarian.

## JOHN REDMOND COMING.



John Redmond, the celebrated Irish nationalist and member of the English parliament, will shortly pay a visit to this country. He will give several lectures while here. This is his very latest picture.